



the BUSINESS CURVE

ADVANCING MINORITY & SMALL BUSINESS AFFAIRS

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Greetings,

We are only one-third of the way through 2022, yet it seems like much has happened in South Carolina, the United States and the world. Change is inevitable. According to former President John F. Kennedy, “Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.” So, in this edition, we will share some highlights from the past, update you on what we are currently doing, and most importantly, offer information and resources to develop and better prepare you for the future.

As you read, discover how the Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs has re-envisioned our training efforts by focusing on more technical education, as exemplified with the Bidding & Estimating course, Transportation Careers Training Program, and Entrepreneur Development Institute Program. We highlight how these and other programs can better equip individuals and firms for future opportunities.

We have also included updates on current and ongoing initiatives. You can become aquatinted with the progress of SCDOT’s 10-year plan and the Carolina Crossroads project, which is presently the largest undertaking in the Agency’s history. SCDOT has made and must continue to make plans to address major repairs and upgrades, given that South Carolina has the fourth largest state highway system in the nation and was recently ranked as the sixth fastest growing state in the U.S according to World Population Review <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/fastest-growing-states>. These updates will not only inform you as to what has been done, but will also provide cues to potential opportunities.

Last but not least, you will learn how to improve contracting odds for yourself and your business, as well as what is on the horizon for SCDOT. We have included insights on searching for opportunities, including opportunities on design-build and professional services projects; an overview of the agency’s software transition from Microstation to Open Roads and OpenBridge; and introductory information on our fast approaching I-526 Low-country Corridor project.

As you may have noticed, we are no longer the same SCDOT of a decade ago. With the new SCDOT, change is the one thing that remains constant. So, I applaud you for taking time to review our newsletter and becoming a student of change.

Best regards,



Greg Davis



And, we would like to thank our contributors who generously wrote articles, provided photographs, caption information, and/or resource files used to generate content.

Mary Wyeth

Editor, the Business Curve

One-on-One Interview with Cyrus Sinor of IPW Construction Group, LLC

1. Tell readers a little about your business.

IPW Construction Group, LLC serves industrial/government and commercial clients throughout South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. We are a highly flexible construction and engineering organization with a broad range of capabilities, meeting the diverse project needs of our clients.

2. How long have you been in business?

Since 2002. This is our 20th year!

3. What made you choose this type of business?

My dad is a Civil Engineer and worked in Construction and Engineering, I loved what he did, so I went to college and became a Civil Engineer.

4. What service(s) or product(s) do you offer/manufacture?

We provide the following professional services: Civil Engineering, Construction Inspection, Surveying, LiDAR (through flying drone), Subsurface Utility Exploration, and Utility Coordination.

We provide Construction Services in General Contracting, Highway Construction, Utility Construction, Electrical and Plumbing.

5. Where did the name come from?

International Public Works – We had worked overseas, and our business model closely represented the capabilities of a military base's Public Works office.

6. How many employees do you have?

We have 22 employees.

7. What is unique about your business?

We are engineers, surveyors and general contractors which allows us to provide our clients a complete project.

8. How long have you been a DBE?

We've been a DBE since 2005.

All photos courtesy of Cyrus Sinor.

9. Why did you choose the DBE program?

When we formed IPW, we mainly performed building construction. Although I had extensive personal experience in sitework, paving, and utility construction, the company did not have any history in those areas, so we were not able to tap into that market. The DBE program helped us get our "foot in the door." We started with small sidewalk projects and have graduated to full sitework and road projects. This happened again when we started our Professional Services Division. As a new land surveying company, the DBE program prepared us to get projects and expand our professional services to subsurface utility exploration, Aerial LiDAR, and Utility Coordination.

The DBE program provides great support to companies through their training programs and guides small business through the hurdles of government contract. Without this type of guidance and mentoring, it would be hard for small businesses to learn all the things they needed to compete and be successful.

10. What are your responsibilities as the business owner?

I end up doing a little of everything. However, my main responsibility is to mentor and supervise my employees so they can be successful.

11. What has been your greatest accomplishment so far being a part of the SCDOT DBE program?

SCDOT has helped us develop a viable and growing professional services division. This would not have been possible without the SCDOT DBE Office.

12. How has the SCDOT helped your business grow?

By providing great training, great projects, and the guidance to help us complete projects successfully. Every year we have been able to take advantage of SCDOT sponsored training classes, everything from Flagger Training to Heavy Equipment Training and more. SCDOT has provided us training which we otherwise would find hard to fund.

13. What are some, if any, of your most complex contracts since being certified?

Since getting certified under professional services our biggest project is the I-85 Design-Build Phase III with Lane/Michael Baker. This project is for 10 miles of interstate widening. On this project we provided an existing condition survey, R.O.W. plats, R.O.W. markers and subsurface utility exploration.

14. What would you say to other businesses that are considering DBE certification?

Being a certified DBE will help open doors, but be prepared before you apply. In most cases, you only have one shot with a prime contractor, and you need to be able to show them you would be an asset to their team. It takes time and a lot of hard work to build up your reputation.

15. What is your long-term business goal?

On the engineering side, we would like to expand into construction testing and inspections on SCDOT projects. On the construction side, we would like to start performing smaller bridge projects. On the personnel side, we would like to continue to hire young professionals and teach and mentor them in these two great professions.

16. What do you attribute your success to in the DBE program?

The entire staff at the Minority and Small Business Office of SCDOT. As a small business it is impossible to know all the rules and regulations and paperwork required in government contracting. It is also not practical to have a full-time staff person assigned to this task. SCDOT staff has always been available to help us navigate our way through the paperwork and pitfalls a small business faces. We could not have made it without their help, guidance, and training!

17. What was your experience to be a small DBE Prime Contractor doing a project for the SCDOT?

It was great to be in charge and work directly for the SCDOT vs. working through a prime. It also gives us a new perspective of what Primes have to do and the additional work of being the Prime Contractor.

18. Is there anything else you would like to add?

I would like to thank all the folks in the DBE office for working so hard for small businesses in South Carolina. It is clear that they really care about this business and for all they do for us. Through the SCDOT we have been able to meet and partner with so many other small and disadvantaged businesses. These businesses are great partners on all our projects, and we would not be successful without them. When we team with other SBE/DBEs we understand each other's problems and challenges. We work together and share equipment, material and sometimes even employees to make sure the project gets done and we are all successful.



Williams Lane – Traffic Circle for Berkeley County



Drainage Project – Charleston County



Dunston Elementary School – Parking Area



Aviation Hangar- Atlantic Aviation- Charleston International Airport – Hangar Slab.

CONGRATULATIONS - NEWLY CERTIFIED DBES (WITHIN THE PAST SIX MONTHS AS OF 02/28/22)

I-BT Express LLC
 HANA Engineers and Consultants, LLC
 Signals Plus, LLC
 We Haul, LLC
 Selective Training Educational Ministries
 Hensley and Goerling Consulting Engineers, LLC - SBE
 Harris Miller Miller & Hanson, Inc.
 Kay's Logistics
 Construction Training Center LLC - Reassigned
 Traffic Control Solutions
 Capital City Utilities LLC - Reassigned
 Perfect Stranger Trucking
 Carolina Seal and Stripe, LLC
 T&T Concrete Construction, Inc.
 Swamp Fox Utilities, LLC
 Bae Urban Economics
 Ascential Technologies, Inc.
 Elisa Lashell Enterprise, LLC
 Carpet for Pennies

GLK Legal & Logistics Group, LLC
 Jackson Management
 Farmer National, LLC
 Magoba, LLC
 TG Construction Group, Inc.
 Robbins & Dewitt
 Kurtis Logistic Systems, LLC
 L&L Hauling & Grading, LLC
 Charles Abatement, LLC
 McNichols Auto Group
 Pine Forest Enterprises, LLC
 Transit Sourcing Source
 Traffic Control Solutions - Reapplied
 Queen Property Services, LLC
 LA Logistics, LLC
 S. A. Mikell & Company, LLC
 Ladies of Rebar, Inc.
 Bobby Leonard Stephens, Jr.
 CE Bennett, LLC

Jarrett Engineering, PLLC
 DunnWright Logistics, Inc.
 Elite Investment Group, LLC
 Willie Keitt and Sons, LLC
 Pine Forest Enterprises, LLC
 Goodson Trucking, LLC
 Bray and Bran, LLC
 Native Transportation Supply, LLC
 OMG It's Gluten Free, LLC
 Creativision Media
 MJ & Miles Trucking, Inc.
 NCL Trucking, LLC
 Legacy Worldwide Consultants, LLC
 Ellis Concrete and Construction
 An Angel's Touch Financial Services, LLC
 Probitas Technology, Inc.
 Stratacore Construction, LLC - SBE
 Isaiah Engineering, Inc.
 Premier App Solutions

Transportation Careers Training Program (TCTP)

By Barbara Beagles, Director, SCDOT Office of Civil Rights Programs

The Transportation Careers Training Program (TCTP) is designed to prepare unemployed, underemployed, minorities, females, and other economically disadvantaged individuals for meaningful employment opportunities in the transportation industry. This program includes Pre-Employment Training, Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Training (Permit only), and Heavy Equipment Operator's Training.

The TCTP will assist in lowering the state's unemployment rate by

Photos courtesy of Barbara Beagles.



Instructor and participant practice maneuvering safety sign and pylon.

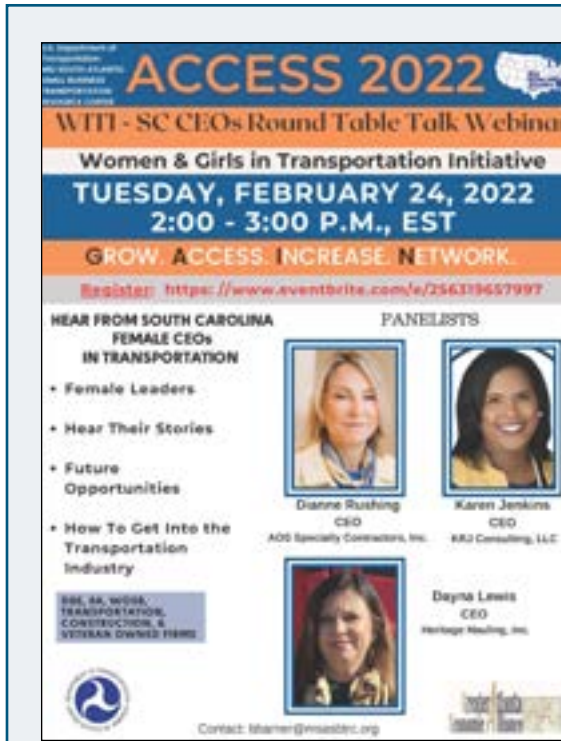
increasing the number of participants that may become gainfully employed after successful completion of this program. It will also assist contractors by creating a pool of applicants from which they may recruit individuals to participate in the On-the-Job Training Program in fulfillment of the Training Special Provision Requirements.

Residents of Orangeburg County are eligible to participate in the program. Six (6) participants are enrolled in the training program.

The TCTP continues to serve as a mechanism for preparing individuals for career opportunities in the transportation industry. The 2022 TCTP will be implemented in Cherokee County.



Participant learning how to tie various knots.



Women in Transportation Roundtable Features DBE CEOs

By Mary Wyeth, Executive Assistant, SCDOT Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs

Karen Jenkins, CEO of KRJ Consulting, LLC and Dianne Rushing, CEO of AOS Specialty Contractors, Inc., are two successful CEOs of certified DBEs who are known to give back to their communities—both personally and professionally. Recently, they were round table webinar panelists who shared their best practices, challenges, success stories and lessons learned. They emphasized to the young women, existing and future entrepreneurs that it is not enough to just seize opportunities, but how to be instrumental in creating opportunities.

The event was one in a series of Women & Girls in Transportation Initiative organized by USDOT's Mid South Atlantic Small Business Transportation Resource Center.

Key take-aways from Ms. Jenkins focused on perseverance and “the need to keep your eye on the light at the end of the tunnel, it is all about mindset and using your energy wisely.”

Ms. Rushing emphasized “find mentors, join professional organizations, hire an accountant/consultant who can keep you apprised of and note trends.”

Both women underscored the necessity and value of networking.

Flyer courtesy of USDOT's Mid South Atlantic Small Business Transportation Resource Center.

Estimating & Bidding For Consultants (Pricing Professional Services)

By Anthony Cromartie, Director, SCDOT Business Development Center

Every Wednesday evening from February 23 – April 6, 2022 the former DBE firm S2 Engineering & Consulting, LLC is facilitating a course at SCDOT Headquarters. Each week they offer insight about how to develop pricing in response to a professional services proposal request. Topics include how to conduct a market analysis, assess your competition, develop a cost proposal, determine what costs to consider and some of the pitfalls you need to avoid.

Participants also exploring the following concepts: how to market your services, how to calculate your costs, what are the elements

Photos courtesy of Anthony Cromartie.



L-R: William Abrams of Abrams Construction and Ashton Williams, SCDOT/ Technical Assistance Engineering Technician.

involved in determining an overhead rate, what is the difference between IFB, RFP, and Market Research. Throughout the course foundational principles include: explanation of bidding process, market analysis, comparative analysis of competition, cost analysis, and how to build a bid.



L-R: Samuel and Sharla Savage of S2 Engineering & Consulting, LLC.



Juan Beltran of Conic Construction, Inc., and Willie Hambrick of Willie's Welding Works, LLC.

CAROLINA CROSSROADS (CCR) PROJECT UPDATE

By David Rister and Brian Klauk, SCDOT Alternative Delivery Team



SCDOT Carolina Crossroads Groundbreaking: Secretary of Transportation, Christy A. Hall, is joined by statewide dignitaries for a groundbreaking ceremony for the South Carolina Department of Transportation's Carolina Crossroads Project. From left: SCDOT Seventh Congressional District Commissioner Tony Cox, SCDOT Fourth Congressional District Commissioner Woody Willard, Jr., SCDOT Third Congressional District Commissioner Pamela Christopher, President and CEO of the S.C. Trucking Association Rick Todd, State Representative Chip Huggins, State Senator Nikki Setzler, U.S. Representative Joe Wilson, Governor Henry McMaster, Secretary of Transportation Christy A. Hall, SCDOT Commission Chairman, and Sixth Congressional District Commissioner J. Barnwell Fishburne, Federal Highway Administration S.C. Division Administrator Emily Lawton, SCDOT Fifth Congressional District Commissioner Gene Branham, Jr., SCDOT Commissioner At-Large James McLawhorne, Jr., SCDOT Second Congressional District Commissioner Bill Dukes. Photo courtesy of Mike Cameron/HDR.

The construction phase of the Carolina Crossroads Project officially kicked-off on Monday, November 8, 2021, when Secretary of Transportation, Christy A. Hall, was joined by statewide dignitaries for a groundbreaking ceremony.

Work on the five-phase project is beginning with Phases 1 and 2 with major construction for both phases anticipated to begin this summer.

Phase 1 design plans have begun arriving for their final reviews and Archer-United Joint Venture (AUJV) will soon start some of the early utility relocation that will set-up the start of Phase 1 Segment 1 construction.

AUJV has also completed some preliminary work for Phase 1 Segment 2 including Work Zone ITS installation and mill and fill along I-26 between the Saluda River and US 378 in preparation of shifting traffic and installing temporary barrier.

Phase 1 logging operations around the railroad and I-126 have also begun. This work is preparing for the construction of laydown areas and access roads to construct Bridge 35.

Over at Carolina Crossroads Phase 2 final subsurface borings have begun. Design, roadway, and bridge plans also continue to progress. AUJV is presently wrapping up demolition activities within the project corridor and performing early utility coordination in planning for a summer start of major construction activities.



Director, DBE Technical Assistance and Mega Projects, Gary Linn at the groundbreaking ceremony for South Carolina Department of Transportation's Carolina Crossroads Project. Director Linn is the Division's liaison to the Carolina Crossroads Project.

While this work is ongoing, SCDOT staff and consultants are preparing procurement documents for Phase 3 which will be SCDOT's largest single project ever. Procurement for Phase 3 is anticipated to take place in the late summer/early fall 2022.

Meanwhile, Phases 4 and 5 continue final design progress.

In other Carolina Crossroads activities, SCDOT recently reached



DBE Seed Slingers, LLC, is active in Phase 1 logging operations at Colonial Life Blvd at I-126. Photo courtesy of Gary Linn.

substantial completion on the Permittee Responsible Mitigation Site (PRM). Additionally, demolition of vacant structures throughout the project corridor continues to take place; some of which is being done in partnership with fire personnel from City of Columbia, West Columbia, Irmo, and Lexington County who are utilizing the demolition of vacant structures as an opportunity for training exercises.



Preliminary design concepts of the I-20 interchange at Broad River Road. Rendering is courtesy of AUJV.

EDIP On-Site Practicum

W. C. Benton + Associates were selected to facilitate the 2022 Entrepreneurial Development Institute Program (EDIP) which concludes with a two-day on-site practicum; while planning, SCDOT staff provided a comprehensive tour of the site at US-1 Widening Project – Lexington.



L-R: Ashton Williams, Sr., DBE Technical Advisor, SCDOT Division of Minority & Small Business Affairs; Shawn Buchanan, Resident Construction Engineer and Adam Smith, Assistant Resident Construction Engineer, both SCDOT Construction – Lexington B; W. C. Benton and Linda McHenry, W. C. Benton + Associates.

Agency Update, 10-Year Plan, and Small Business Opportunities

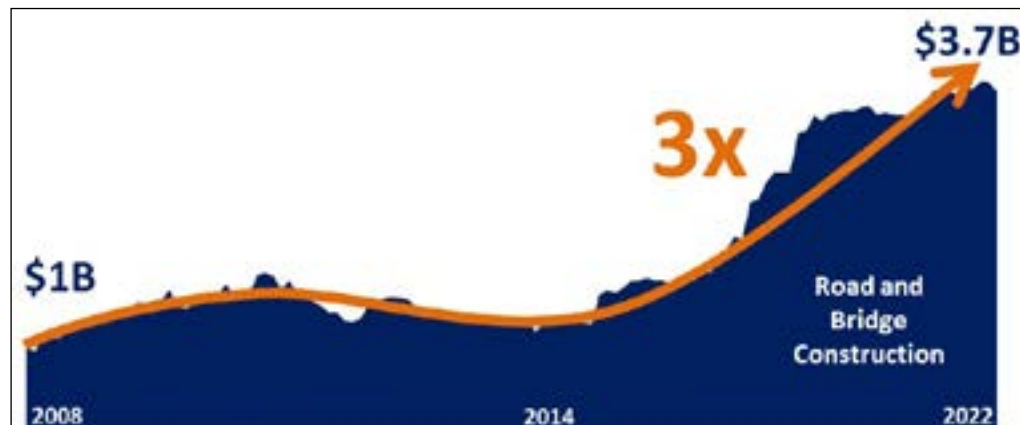


Gas Tax Passed 2016:

To better handle the expansive highway system and rapid population growth rate, South Carolina passed a gasoline tax. The tax on gas increased two cents each year for a period of six years. The final two cents will be added July 1st of this year. Each penny increase generates approximately \$36 million towards the state's road and bridge construction program.

Roadwork has ramped up:

The gas tax allowed SCDOT to increase construction by over three times.



In 2017:

As a result of additional funding, in 2017 SCDOT enacted a Strategic 10-year plan. The plan addressed major repairs and upgrades in four key areas.

10-Year Plan Accomplishments thus far:

Since SCDOT launched its Strategic 10-Year Plan in 2017, improvements have occurred in each of the much needed areas. Consequently, opportunities for getting work have increased and will continue to grow as the 10-Year-Plan unfolds. The Business Curve is focused on sharing tools and resources for you and other small businesses to get work with SCDOT and other entities so we invite you to read on, make notes, and take action.



Source: Secretary of Transportation Christy A. Hall, "State of SC's Transportation Network, March 22" delivered at State of DOT Address at SC State House, March 16, 2022.

Computer Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) Environment Transitioning to OpenRoads/OpenBridge Designer

By Seth Lown, CADD Support Engineer, SCDOT Design Automation Office of Preconstruction Support



The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) is constantly seeking opportunities to improve the process for delivery of design plans in support of the SCDOT 10 Year Plan, available for review online at: <https://www.scdot.org/projects/ten-year-plan.aspx>. Plan production software is a critical element of this process and to ensure SCDOT maintains a high level of efficiency, we are initiating a transition to Bentley Software's OpenRoads Designer and OpenBridge Designer. This most recent generation of software will replace Microstation and Geopak to become our primary plan production software and will greatly enhance our long-term goal of digital plan delivery utilizing 3-D modeling.

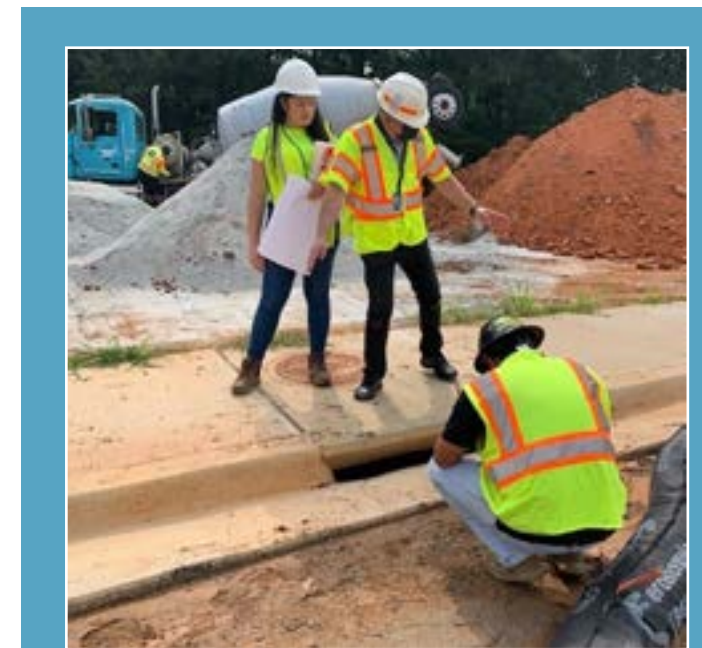
This new technology provides SCDOT and its partners the ability to more efficiently deliver plans with the inclusion of 3-D modeling of roadways and bridges. These 3-D models increase

collaboration between the design and construction processes, leading to enhanced quality control, improved contractor bidding, fewer project conflicts, more accurate cost estimates, and enhanced construction methodology, such as Automated Machine Guidance (AMG).

Migrating to new software and new workflows will be an exciting, yet significant endeavor for SCDOT and its partners. This transition will include developing a new CADD workspace, creating new documentation, and providing training opportunities over the next several years. To accomplish this transition, representatives from SCDOT have initiated intensive coordination with Bentley. SCDOT is also initiating coordination with the South Carolina chapter of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC-SC) to ensure our private sector partners are with us throughout this transition.

SCDOT looks forward to implementing new, modernized technology and leading the effort to improve plan delivery in support of the SCDOT's 10 Year Plan.

Please subscribe to Preconstruction Updates at: <https://www.scdot.org/business/CADD-Design.aspx>. This subscription will ensure you receive updates for the latest developments in SCDOT plan production software.



Chief Technical Advisor & Compliance Manager, **James Cooper**, provided one-on-one training to APEX Construction Group, LLC on how to install concrete invert and catch basins including how to order materials according to SCDOT QPL (qualifying product list) and checking elevations. The training prepared APEX to successfully install four Catch Basin Type 16 with a SCDOT project in Aiken County.

Pictured L-R: Grace Hidalgo, APEX Construction Group, LLC; James Cooper, SCDOT; and Luis Hidalgo, APEX Construction Group, LLC.

Photograph courtesy of Gary Linn



Looking for opportunities in road, bridge and highway construction?

By Gary Linn, Director, SCDOT DBE Technical Assistance & Mega Projects

The SCDOT Director of Construction maintains a webpage with comprehensive letting information for everyone to review. One of the best documents to look at is the Notice to Contractors. It is usually published five weeks prior to the next letting and contains all of the project identifiers, location and line items of work anticipated to construct the project. Visit: <http://info2.sharepoint.dot.state.sc.us/currentletting/Pages/default.aspx>.

The Division of Minority & Small Business Affairs also publishes a Potential Plan Holders List two to three weeks prior to the letting identifying prime contractors who have obtained a copy of a project's plans and may bid on the project. This list is a living document updated a few times leading up to the letting date (usually the second Tuesday of each month). Access it on our page: <https://www.scdot.org/business/bus-development-dbe-tech-compliance.aspx>. Additionally, the South Carolina Division of Procurement maintains an online live database known as the South Carolina Business Opportunities (SCBO) for goods, services, information technology and construction needs of state and local government. The South Carolina Procurement Code requires state agencies to advertise solicitations for goods, services, information technology, or construction with estimated values in excess of specified thresholds in SCBO. Other entities, such as cities, counties and school districts may voluntarily advertise in SCBO. MSBA Technical Advisors are always ready, willing and able to assist of DBE / SBE firm in your endeavors seeking opportunities to bid. Visit: <https://scbo.sc.gov/online-edition>.



DBE Work on SCDOT Design Build Projects

By Jim Ewart, Archer-United Joint Venture (AUJV)

Over a decade ago, SCDOT began awarding design build projects. Until that time almost all their procurement for road and bridge construction was the traditional method of Bid and Build. With the bid build method, SCDOT would design (or have an engineering firm design their project), then do a detailed quantity take off, solicit mostly unit prices, and then award the contract. To speed up delivery and foster innovation the Design Build portion of SCDOT’s program continues to grow, especially on larger more complicated projects.

AUJV is a Joint Venture of Archer-Western and UIG. While each member of the joint venture has projects in their own name, they have teamed and been successful on three large projects in the Columbia area. As such, SCDOT has requested we make some comments about DBE participation and success on SCDOT’s design build projects.

- On SCDOT’s website, one can click Doing Business, then Design Build and finally Active Projects to find the Design Build projects that are in the procurement stage. <https://www.scdot.org/business/business-landing.aspx>.
- In Design Build, SCDOT typically selects three to four firms to compete for a particular project. The selection process is detailed, and a numerical score is issued. You can find the short-listed firms (SLFs) and much more information by using SCDOT Website as mentioned above.
- Once short-listing is complete, a Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued by SCDOT. This document details all aspects of the project and allows flexibility in the design.
- It is not uncommon for each SLF to have a different design that will be scored. This design information is highly confidential, since it will be the basis of a final score which could determine which SLF is awarded the project.

- DBE goals on design build are usually higher than on Bid Build projects.
- Remember that designs are not totally complete when Final Proposals are submitted. Hence, final quantities of work are not finalized. Without final quantities, SCDOT does not require that all DBE firms to be utilized are listed at the time of proposal submittal. However, before construction starts, DBE firms and dollar value of their subcontract work must be finalized, submitted and approved by SCDOT.

With the above overview of design build, we offer the following recommendations to DBE firms:

- Use SCDOT website to identify projects and Short-listed firms.
- Contact these firms early in the process to introduce yourself and your firm’s specialty.
- Since some of the competing SLFs may be from out of state, providing resumes with a company profile and work experience is extremely important to do early in the process.
- Understand that each SLF might have a different list of estimated quantities based upon their individual design.
- Also be prepared to sign a non-disclosure agreement concerning their confidential design.
- Try to limit the number of qualifications included in your bid. The SLF’s are bidding a lump Sum price but will solicit unit prices. However, the subs with fewer risk are preferable.
- Understand that the quantities presented at bid time may be different once final design is complete and be prepared.
- Finally, it may be several months before your subcontracts are written pending the Prime contractor’s final design progress.

In closing, Design Build in South Carolina has very real DBE opportunities. So, please take time to research upcoming projects to be able to take advantage of this ever-increasing market.

Payment Process

By Kace Smith, Chief Financial Officer, SCDOT



Contractor invoices and pay requests are received by the Accounts Payable Department electronically from the Construction and Professional Services Offices. Validated and complete invoices are processed into the State’s Enterprise Information System (SCEIS) by the Accounts Payable Office. Next, the South Carolina Comptroller General’s Office reviews all requests for vendor payments and then issues a warrant on the State

Treasurer’s Office to issue payment to the vendor.

Semi-monthly, SCDOT publishes the most recently processed construction contract file numbers that have been sent to the Comptroller General for payment processing. This information can be located on the SCDOT website at: <https://www.scdot.org/performance/vendor-payments-memo.aspx>.

If you haven’t already, please choose to sign up for vendor direct deposit with the South Carolina Treasurer’s Office. This option allows vendors to receive their payments sooner than waiting for a hardcopy check to be printed and delivered by the US post office. Additional information is available at: <https://treasurer.sc.gov/what-we-do-for-businesses/electronic-payment-information>.

I-526 Lowcountry Corridor Project - Future Opportunities for Work

By Mary Wyeth

Project Director for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor, Joy Riley, is extremely passionate about her work as a member of SCDOT’s Office of Alternative Delivery. She provided a brief summary of the project and a high level view of its schedule. This information serves as an introduction to a series of articles and updates about the project and future opportunities for getting work with SCDOT.

According to the project’s dedicated website “526 Lowcountry Corridor” the ‘23-mile corridor connects West Ashley and Mount Pleasant and has been identified by SCDOT as one of the state’s most congested interstate highways – and it’s among the Department’s top priorities statewide’ (www.526lowcountrycorridor.com). Furthermore, the project’s scope led to the decision to divide it into two projects, I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST and I-526 Lowcountry Corridor EAST. Both projects are currently engaged in the usual project development process.



Photographs courtesy of Amy Smith, CDM Smith.
Schedule courtesy of Joy Riley.

Finalize Environmental Impact Statement & Community Mitigation Plan	2022
Community Mitigation Implementation	2023-2038
Construction of Affordable Housing	2023-2025
Right of Way Acquisition & Relocation	2023-2028
Reconnecting North Charleston Infrastructure Project Construction in Communities	2024-2026
First I-526 West DB Interstate Package	2028-2033
Issue Packages every 1-2 years (total 8-10 interstate projects)	2028-2040
Ongoing Environmental & Community Outreach Engineering Contract work available	2022-2038

High Level Schedule: A high level view of I-526 Lowcountry Corridor schedule.

Ms. Riley noted “We started this project about 5 years ago and have been working in the community doing outreach for the last 2+ years as part of the Environmental Impact Statement.” This statement is part of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) review process which is crucial in moving the project forward to the construction phase (<https://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/project-development-process/>).

Look forward to additional information and updates in future issues.



Engaged citizen reviews proposed community improvements for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor WEST project.



Members of the communities in North Charleston gather at the dedicated Community Office located at Gas Lite Square in North Charleston. They review project info with community liaisons and talk with right-of-way specialists.

Davis Committee Chairmanship Ends

By Mary Wyeth

Recently, Greg Davis concluded his tenure as American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Committee on Civil Rights Chair, after serving from 2018-2021. AASHTO's Committee on Civil Rights works cooperatively with the Association's Member Departments and as appropriate with other committees, agencies, and external organizations to provide equal access and ensure nondiscrimination in all programs and activities involving Federal dollars. This includes researching and evaluating the effectiveness of civil rights programs and reporting findings of issues, as well as sharing any best practices, to Member Departments on programs such as Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, Equal Employment Opportunity, On-The-Job Training, Non-Discrimination (Title VI), Americans with Disabilities Act and Supportive Services.

During Davis's tenure, he and the Civil Rights Steering Committee dealt with a rise in social unrest, a major downfall in the economy and the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee brought to the forefront the role civil rights play in the three areas. The committee's efforts resulted in the unanimous adoption of an AASHTO Resolution declaring the Association's commitment to issues of race, equity, diversity and inclusion. Furthermore, the association established the inclusion of civil rights topics in regional



Photo courtesy of CapturedByKevin.

Secretary of Transportation Christy Hall and then AASHTO Committee on Civil Rights Chair, Greg Davis at an AASHTO event in Charlotte, NC.

and national conferences, as well as adopting "equity, diversity and inclusion" as a part of the organization's five core values.

Staff Recognition

Natalie Blackburn

Natalie Blackburn began her tenure in the Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs (MSBA) in October 2016 as a temporary employee who within a few months transitioned to a permanent full time position in May 2017. She is currently the Administrative Coordinator for the DBE Certification Unit in the Office of Civil Rights Programs. Natalie processes and assigns DBE/SBE applications, reviews data to ensure applicants are compliant with federal regulations, develops reports, and provides administrative assistance to the SCDOT's Disadvantaged Business Program.

Ms. Blackburn also serves as the DBE Liaison for the Certification Unit providing technical assistance to small businesses regarding DBE certification, Interstate Certification, South Carolina Unified Certification Program (SCUCP) directory and other duties relating to the program. She also attends outreach events, provides information regarding DBE eligibility to interested persons and assists with special projects.

Prior to joining the MSBA team, Ms. Blackburn who holds a degree in Language and Literacy, taught English Language (ELA) at the high school level. She enjoyed mentoring and molding young future leaders during her tenure as a teacher. Now she uses that motivation to help current and prospective DBEs attain best practices to ensure that their needs are met as strive for success in the DBE program.



Henry Jones

Henry Jones started with South Carolina Department of Transportation in October 2016 as a Supply Coordinator for the Aiken Maintenance Office. He earned a promotion in April 2019 to become the On-The-Job Training Program Coordinator in the Office of Civil Rights Programs. Since then Mr. Jones has worked hand and hand with contractors' on-the-job coordinators to ensure they meet the Federal Highway Administration Training Special Provision requirements; the team ensures contractors are compliant when providing training for new hires and minority, women, and/or economically disadvantaged individuals. Mr. Jones is dedicated to "evening the playing field" when it comes to opportunities for minority and women in highway construction.

Mr. Jones holds an Associate of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Management from Aiken Technical College. He also earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Management from Strayer University. Currently, Henry is working towards his Master of Science degree in Project Management. Recently, he received a certificate of program completion in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace from the University of South Florida's Muma College of Business.



Mary Wyeth

Mary Wyeth has served as the executive assistant for the Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs (MSBA) for just over one year—initially, she joined the Division in a temporary capacity before landing the full-time position in November 2021. Her key responsibilities in this fast-paced environment include: providing full administrative support services for directors and staff while serving as Division Director Greg Davis's executive assistant; serving the Division as both HR Liaison and HR Benefits Coordinator; scheduling meetings and conferences; preparing reports/minutes, correspondence, agendas and various documents for office directors; and serving as editor of the Division's bi-annual newsletter, the Business Curve.

Communication, timeliness, customer service, and teamwork are the linchpins which drive the Division's work. Wyeth adds value by regularly reviewing policies, procedures, and innumerable program documents both to deepen her understanding of the Division and SCDOT, and for the purpose of offering solicited written/verbal feedback to team members, in one-on-one or small group meetings. She assists her colleagues in communicating consistent and clear messaging in delivering program compliance. Mary has been referred to as a wily wordsmith eager to offer observations, ask clarifying questions about audience and purpose, and brainstorm possible revisions to achieve desired outcomes.

A two-time Bucknell University graduate, Mary majored in English and minored in African American Studies as an undergraduate before earning her Master of Arts in English. She was director of a university writing center in New York before she relocated to South Carolina's Midlands and joined SCDOT. She occasionally teaches a "Composition and Rhetoric" course at a local technical college.

Staff photos courtesy of Cody Crouch.



Photo courtesy of Rob Thompson

Remembering Stephen P. Smith, 1943 - 2022

It is with sadness that we inform you of the passing of retired SCDOT employee Stephen P. Smith. According to his son Greg, Steve died peacefully in his sleep Saturday morning, January 22nd. Steve retired from SCDOT in December 2019, where he served as a training coordinator in the Business Development Center. According to Greg Davis, Steve will be remembered for his passion for assisting businesses with financial matters, including Quick Books training; his love of photography; and his oftentimes dry humor.

After his retirement, Steve moved back north to Connecticut to be near his son, daughter-in-law, and three grandchildren, whom his cherished.

Mr. Smith's full obituary is accessible at <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/thestate/name/stephen-smith-obituary?id=32695558>

DBE/SBE UPCOMING TRAINING COURSES

DATE

April 4-14, 2022

April 13, 20, 27, 2022

April 26- April 27, 2022

May 11, 18, 25, 2022

May 12, 2022

May 19, 2022

June 13-14, 2022

June 23, 2022

Winter 2022

COURSE

Pre-Highway Earthwork

Onsite: Tri-County Technical College, Pendleton Campus

Microsoft Office – Excel, Word & PowerPoint

Onsite - Headquarters- G22

Certified Erosion Prevention & Sediment Control Inspection. CEPSCI

Onsite -Columbia, SC

Business Development & Management Training

Virtual Training via Zoom

Small Business Access to Capital

Onsite – Headquarters – G14

QuickBooks- Online Version

In Person- Headquarters Bldg. G-14

Fundamentals of Program Management

Onsite: University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

How to Find Work

Virtual Training via Zoom

Estimating & Bidding for Consultants - TBA

Onsite- Columbia

Interested in registering for an upcoming training? Complete the Training Registration Form at: <https://www.scdot.org/business/pdf/businessDevelop/2022-January-June-Calendar.pdf> then email it to: DBEBusinessDevelopmentCenter@scdot.org